

problems arising from the practical work of the Services. It is divided into two parts, the first dealing with what are called "vigilance" tests, i.e. attempts to measure the decrease in the performance of reactions to an intermittent stimulus over somewhat lengthy periods; the second part deals with "environmental stress" tests, such as the effects of non-lethal war gases and of high atmospheric temperatures. The experimental design in each case appears to be adequate, the statistics sound, and the apparatus ingenious. The conclusions are not over-stated and appear to follow naturally from the experiments. Within its compass the work is, therefore, sound, if of little fundamental interest. The attempts of the author to integrate the findings of his vigilance tests with conditioning theories do not seem very convincing to the reviewer and appear to be largely on a semantic level. It is a pity that the writer has failed to add to his investigations by devising experiments to account for the individual differences so obvious among the members of his group. His only effort in that direction, comparison between fresh subjects and tired subjects, shows what might have been done in that direction.

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SOCIOLOGY

Gregg, Pauline. *A Social and Economic History of Britain, 1760-1950.* London, 1950. George G. Harrap & Co. Pp. 584. Price 18s.

THIS is one of the most exciting books I have read. It is not only packed with historical facts but they are so well presented that, in spite of their often gruesome nature, every page is a delight to read and impossible to skip. Nevertheless, it is not a perfect book. It never once mentions the word "Eugenics," or shows any sign of appreciation of the facts of human heredity—although it brings out very clearly the sterling qualities of our British stock. It also betrays a strong class bias—and goes very far to justify it! Not only the terrible

selfishness and utter callousness of the upper-classes as a whole (with a few notable exceptions, to some of whom Dr. Gregg does full justice) but their distressing opposition to every reform and panic seizure of every opportunity of cancelling these reforms after they have been passed into law is a sorry tale indeed. Yet the tale as a whole is not only exciting but deeply inspiring, since, in spite of opposition and obstruction, reform and progress have gone steadily forward; and in this march are seen wonderful leaders with outstanding gifts of heart and mind. Curiously enough, a Bill concerning little chimney sweeps "introduced into the Lords by Shaftesbury was there carried, but met its defeat in the Commons." When all is said and done, may not the inordinate clinging to privilege, which we now all deplore, really be one of the less attractive of human traits rather than a class distinction? Moreover, there is a powerful strain in the British character which rises up against every sort of Government interference. *The Times* newspaper actually declared "it would rather take its chance of cholera and the rest, than be bullied into health by the Public Health Board." Indeed, on many occasions, public bodies, as well as individuals, appeared to regard a public drainage system as a gross violation of the liberty of the subject. Nevertheless, continued epidemics did gradually lead to a more enlightened point of view, and fear of contagion reinforced human compassion.

Such a book is bound to omit a lot in selection and Dr. Gregg's work is on the whole both fair and comprehensive, but she mentions the Shops (Hours of Closing) Act of 1928 as though it were the first of its kind—whereas John Lubbock, one of many who cared about such things, passed the Shop Hours Regulation Act (limiting the hours of labour of young people under 18) in 1886 and the Shop Hours Act (Early Closing) in 1904, after 30 years' hard struggle. These were amongst the thirty private member's Bills he introduced into, and passed through Parliament, beginning with the Bank Holidays Act in 1871. Dr. Gregg's quotations are often devastating in their grim horror,

but she affords relief by many amusing side-lights into human peculiarities, such as man's delight in secret ritual and dressing-up, etc. (pp. 69 and 170). Her sense of humour—although subtle and somewhat sardonic—peeps out on many occasions and enables the saddened reader to indulge in a sly smile—for instance: "New houses were often little better than the old, the jerry-builder doing as he pleased and his pleasure being profit," or "... a slowly dawning realization that harsh workhouse conditions could not make the sick well, the infirm agile or the workless employed."

Her Epilogue is quite admirable: "The story has yet no ending. Strife and endeavour lie before as well as behind. Stupendous sources of power are about to be released. . . . *Laissez-faire*, so newly achieved, is already an outworn dogma. . . . A new way of life has emerged, different from the past in its nature, its values, its pleasures. We know more, we can do more. May the story of our past help us to do it better." So ends a great book. We can but congratulate Dr. Gregg on a very fine piece of work, and echo her pious hope.

URSULA GRANT DUFF.

Hollingshead, August B. *Elmtown's Youth—The Impact of Social Classes on Adolescents*. New York, 1949. John Wiley. Pp. 480. Price \$5.00.

IN *Elmtown's Youth* Professor Hollingshead seeks to study the reaction of the adolescent to social class differences existing in the community in which he is maturing. The book divides into four sections: first, a discussion of the research problem, followed by an explanation of field procedures, the community setting, and, finally, detailed studies of specific areas of adolescent behaviour within the community framework. Advised by the Chicago Committee on Human Development a "typical Middle Western community" was selected as a centre for the inquiry, which took place between June 1941 and December 1942; (it would have been helpful if the criteria of selection which led

to Elmtown being judged as "typical" could have been described). After summarizing the relevant existing work in this field, the writer discusses the steps leading to the formulation of the central hypothesis, namely that "the social behaviour of adolescents appears to be related functionally to the position their families occupy in the social structure of the community." This is justified, it is suggested, because adolescent behaviour defined as "social action patterns of young people" depends more upon the position the individual occupies in the social structure than upon the physical and psychological changes associated with this age. Though the remainder of the book presents supporting evidence the reader is nevertheless aware that a study of the relationships between the impact of social class differences within the community and the bio-psychological changes of adolescence is necessary to support this assertion. However, no "emphasis is placed on psychological and physical phenomena" as "we are dealing with adolescent behaviour rather than adolescence."

Field procedures are discussed somewhat briefly, clarity being sometimes sacrificed as a result. There were three sources of data; a selected group of adolescents, their parents, and persons outside the family group. Statistical information was derived from questionnaires completed on 549 families and 752 adolescents. In addition Dr. Hollingshead and his wife were successfully absorbed into the Elmtown community, thus allowing them to play observer roles with a minimum of suspicion and antagonism on the part of those observed. This produced two effects. First, the families of the selected adolescents could be rated on an "evaluated participation" scale, giving five grades distinguished according to social class criteria. Secondly, the writer secured an insight into the structure of the community through discussing "the way things work around here" with a wide variety of Elmtowners. This material is presented in discussing the community setting, the most stimulating section of the book. Having showed that "Elmtowners deny the existence of classes but act as if classes exist," Dr. Hollingshead examines the